

May Newsletter – *Where Are You?*

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” (Genesis 3:8-9)

Adam and Eve in the garden have had their moment with the serpent, and now they are hiding from God. Why? Because after eating the forbidden fruit they have discovered that they are naked. Meanwhile, God is enjoying the cool of the evening and as he strolls through the garden he calls out to Adam, “Where are you?”. It’s a legitimate question, and one that no doubt arises because God, being God, knows exactly what has happened. Adam and Eve have fallen victim to the wiles of the serpent and have substituted their will for God’s. Perhaps God’s question is meant to awaken Adam to his existential predicament. So understood, “Where are you?” may be an invitation for Adam (and Eve) to reflect on their relationship with God and the meaning of his (their) existence.

I have been reflecting on God’s question to the couple recently, and realizing how relevant it is to our lives as well. **Is God wondering where you are?** Probably, because, if you are like me, you have drifted away from God, and you may even have lost track of yourself. We become lost, don’t we, and it can be difficult to find our way back to the right path.

In this situation it is important that we avoid the example set by Adam and Eve. They sought to hide themselves; no doubt, because they wrongly supposed that God would punish them. But God’s intention is not to punish but to benefit and uphold us. And yet, God did expel them from the garden, wasn’t that punishment? I don’t know that God expelled them from paradise at all. Weren’t they already outside of paradise the moment they disobeyed God’s instructions? Isn’t their effort to hide themselves a clear indication that they are no longer in paradise? After all, how can one be in paradise if one is separated from the source of one’s being?

So when God calls “Where are you?” the best strategy is not to persist in the delusion that one is safely hidden from God. A better way is to run towards the One calling, so that you may be led out of the confusion and turmoil you have created for yourself, and towards the way of life for which you were created.

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